



Bruces Open Vet Hospital

From air and marine defense systems to veterinary medicine, David and Anna Bruce have done it all.

Last week, the couple opened Read Mountain Animal Hospital off Cloverdale Road (Alt. 220) and Read Mountain Road in Cloverdale.

David Bruce decided to become a veterinarian after he and his wife bought an exotic bird and attended a conference of bird owners. Bruce has been an engineer by trade for 10 years after he graduated from Virginia Tech in 1982, working for defense contractors Westinghouse and Sperry Marine.

Bruce quit his job with Sperry Marine and returned to Blacksburg where he studied veterinary medicine. After graduating in 1996, he worked at Henry County Animal Clinic in Martinsville.

Last fall, the couple decided to open their own hospital in Botetourt. The couple picked this area because of the growth, people, history, schools and local government. "It's an ideal place," said Bruce.

The new hospital will be able to treat all types of animal injuries, illnesses and dental work. The facility contains an intensive care unit, treatment area, surgery room, X-ray room, dark-room, cat ward, dog kennel and isolation room. We can do anything a human hospital can do," said Bruce.

The hospital specializes in the treatment of domestic and exotic pets. "Exotic pets are becoming more popular," said Bruce. "There have been a lot of medical advances."

Snakes, birds, lizards, rabbits and other animals are welcome, he added. However, the hospital will not handle livestock.

Bruce is happy to see more pets owners bringing their animals in for preventive and general care. One of the most important things he sees in the future of veterinary medicine is increased dental care. "Dogs are living longer which makes their teeth more important. Veterinary dentistry can help with tooth loss, but many veterinary schools are not teaching it," he said.

Anna Bruce, an archeologist, will help her husband as a veterinary technician. The couple will be the only employees at the facility for the first few months of operation. The couple will more than likely hire a licensed veterinary technician and additional front desk staff within a year.

Anna Bruce also expects to do some boarding at the facility. The hospital will house six dog runs to start. If the boarding program is successful, the couple may request additional dog runs from the Planning Commission.

The 2,400-square-foot facility was originally an 800-square-foot farmhouse. Anna Bruce is researching the old house to determine when it was built and way to restore it as close as possible to its original condition.

The old section will be used for a reception area and examination room. “We have tried to keep the building as original as possible. We want it to be a home atmosphere,” said Anna Bruce.

The hospital is open from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday and Friday. Thursday hours are from 8 a.m. – 9 p.m.